

## **Annapolis High School and Annapolis Middle School IB MYP Inclusion Policy**

As our students come to us from a variety of backgrounds and have a range of academic, physical and other needs, we recognize that implementation of the IB MYP must include learning experiences that will allow all students, including those with special needs, to meet the objectives of all eight subject groups. By differentiating their teaching strategies, teachers will provide all students with opportunities to reach these goals. Differentiated teaching aims to maximize students' potential and allows them to demonstrate their learning in different ways.

### **Philosophy of Special Needs in AACPS**

We recognize that special education is a journey with no true finish lines, just continuous opportunities to grow in a limitless future. The Anne Arundel County Public School System and Division of Special Education has embraced the concept of responsibility, independence and contribution in its delivery of specialized instruction for students with disabilities and advanced learners. The commitment to children and passion in making a difference, collaboratively, is evident in all aspects of our educational programs. In fact, it is due to the integration of services, outreach to family and community and a strong belief that all students can learn, that our students have acquired the academic, vocational and social/emotional skills needed to transition to adulthood with conviction, self-confidence and competence.

We are federally mandated to focus on appropriate educational settings for every student in the “least restrictive environment,” which will differ for each and every student. The Anne Arundel Public Schools system has a philosophy of providing opportunities to all students in inclusive settings, a philosophy that is in line with least restrictive environments. We attempt to include all students in courses rather than providing separate learning environments. As necessary for students with disabilities, we provide, with the support of an IEP, a general educator and a special educator or a 504 plan with a general educator. If it is decided that full inclusion is not in the best interest of the child, then the IEP team will meet to discuss other programming options that may include a change in the student's setting.

### **Eligibility and Identification of Advanced Learners**

- Math: Based on Middle School placement; tracking already predetermined
- AP: Self-selected at the high school level
- Honors vs. Standard Curriculum: Self-selected and based on teacher recommendations

### **Eligibility and Identification for Special Education**

At both the middle and high school level, teachers are experienced in including students with disabilities in their classroom. Teachers are interested in the success of all students in their classes and, as such, provide instruction and oversight, while continuing to ensure that the student is meeting with success. Teachers are required to keep the student and parents apprised of any concerns and have several support staff available to assist them in meeting students' needs, including a Special Education Department Chairperson, school counselor, school administrator, school nurse, speech and language pathologist and school psychologist. Anne Arundel County Public Schools provides several workshops, in-services and professional development seminars on differentiated instruction. In addition, staff members who instruct students with an IEP will meet with the Special Educator at the beginning of the school year to familiarize themselves with the needs of the student. Staff members who instruct students with 504 plans will meet with the Guidance Department.

Children with disabilities from birth to age 21 may be eligible for special education. Federal law defines “children with disabilities” as having any of the following types of disabilities: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment (including blindness).

A student who is suspected of having a disability is referred to the IEP team after school-based interventions have been tried and the RST team has been utilized. The IEP team meets to review the referral and existing data, information from the parent, previously implemented instructional interventions and strategies, current classroom-based assessments/curriculum measures and observations. Based on this information, the IEP team shall determine the need for assessment. Parents also have the right to request an initial IEP meeting if concerned about student progress.

Assessment tools are used to diagnose a student’s needs when the staff suspects a disability that has an educational impact. These diagnostic tests vary depending on the nature of the concern. If it is a concern that may warrant special education, the intervention team can be quite comprehensive and may include a special educator, school psychologist, general educator who teaches the child, administrator, and frequently the speech and language pathologist. In the case of a need for a 504 plan, both a current diagnosis and input from all current teachers are used to determine educational impact of the disability and to prepare appropriate accommodations. In instances where evaluation occurs, the "test" administered is determined by the full team of either the 504 or IEP team and test results are communicated to the parent within federal guidelines.

### **Special Education Department**

The Special Education Department Chair monitors IEPs of all students in the school. 504 students’ plans are monitored by the Guidance Department. The 504 plans accommodations are copied each semester and provided to the teachers who teach the student. Students with IEP's receive quarterly progress reports and annual review. Providers maintain a record of services provided. Teachers provide accommodations per the plans and students know that they are receiving them. If there is concern from a parent or student that they are not receiving their accommodations, a meeting can be called at any time to express this concern. All documentation is maintained in the cumulative folder. After a student graduates the information is maintained for 7 years and then discarded. No information is sent to a third party without a release and there is no indication on transcripts that a student has a disability. Only those who have a direct need for information will have access to a student’s records. Generally, school psychologists, special educators, administrators and guidance counselors access the student file. General education teachers may also see the student file to review information if they teach the child.

### **SEN Policy and Programs**

General educators who teach special education students should be highly qualified in their area of expertise and special educators should be certified in special education. Presently the Annapolis feeder system is providing special education service to students in most of the 13 federally handicapping conditions; however, the majority of the students receiving special education are identified as having a specific learning disability.

The special educators are committed to providing services including, but not limited to, remediation to students who are performing below grade level, providing information to general educator regarding student’s needs regarding modifications and accommodations.

Testing and screening are done using a variety of formal and informal sources developed by the Special Education Department at the County level to provide uniformity of testing and screening. Formal testing administered by school personnel are from an approved list of standardized tests approved by the Special Education Department at the County level. At Annapolis High School, the IEP Facilitator/Chairperson is the person responsible for notifying concerned parties of meetings to review test results. Parents of students in special education receive quarterly progress reports sent home before or at the same time as report cards. Special education student progress is noted with input from general educators and the special education case manager assigned to monitor the student.

Professional development should involve specific training in providing differentiated instruction. General educators need to be aware of modifications and accommodations necessary for students and be able to implement them. Consultation with special educators is an integral part of the service delivery for any special education that is experiencing difficulty in a general education classroom. A complete copy of the IEP for a special education student is available to all teachers in a secure area and general education teachers should be provided with the “Snapshot” to include the modifications and accommodations required for that student to be successful in the general education setting.

Articulation between the IB/MYP coordinator, special education department chair and registrar is necessary to ensure that the needs for special education students have been reviewed and plans have been made for the student to maximize their greatest academic potential.

### **Service Continuum for Special Education**

**Service Continuum:** The Anne Arundel County School System provides a continuum of services ranging from consultation and general education programming to specialty classes, regional programs and separate public and private (approved nonpublic) school placements. Each elementary, middle, and high school in Anne Arundel County provides special education and related services for students who are identified as eligible for services.

#### **Indirect/Consultation:**

- Provide the general educator with guidance from the special education teacher on appropriate strategies for instruction, behavior management, data collection, observation, and feedback in the general education setting.
- Facilitate service delivery through ongoing communication between general and special educators and related service providers.
- Assistance in completing functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and developing a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) to address areas of concern.

#### **Direct Service Delivery (within the general education setting)**

- Direct special education instruction within the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom through TEAM teaching, and collaborative instructional models.
- Direct support for individual students by the special education teacher or instructional assistant by making adaptations or modifications to the general education curriculum and assessments.
- Individualized or small group instruction to meet the academic and behavior needs of the student, either within the general education classroom or with pull-aside resource services for specific skill development.

#### **Direct Service Delivery (outside the general education setting)**

- Direct intensive or multi-sensory instruction utilizing specialized strategies and techniques in a small group, self-contained environment with an alternative curriculum when necessary.

- More specific skill training in remediation of academic skill deficits or in the social, emotional, and behavioral areas.
- Supports that address behavioral difficulties that interfere with the student's learning or the learning of other students.

**Direct Service Delivery (combined)**

Students may receive direct service in both the general education and special education classrooms. This is an IEP team decision based on individual student need.

**Professional Development**

We are committed to providing continuous training and support to general educators to use research-based interventions and strategies to support differentiated instruction to meet needs to special education students. We work to train teachers to work in co-teaching teams in order to provide the least restrictive environment possible for students.